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## ‘New Left’ in the Post-Yugoslav Space: Issues, Sites, and Forms

Igor Štiks<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction: What is the Post-Yugoslav ‘new left’?

Seven new states have been formed where Yugoslavia once stood. It is a *post-Yugoslav*, *post-partition*, *post-conflict*, and *post-socialist* landscape, one that seems to be in a never-ending ‘transition’ into free-market economies and liberal democracies.<sup>2</sup> The appearance of what I will call here the post-Yugoslav ‘new left’ can be clearly detected in the post-2008 crisis period. The one salutary consequence of the 2008 financial crash was its delegitimizing effect on the previously almost unquestioned neoliberal dogma and on the idea that there is ‘no alternative’ to capitalism. When the shock wave hit the post-socialist Balkans, it only added an additional blow to an already ruined landscape.

After a series of devastating wars during the 1990s, which involved most of the post-Yugoslav states, came the post-war ‘recovery’ in the form of the usual neoliberal ‘restructuring’. Privatization campaigns, besides lucrative deals for foreign companies and banks, gave rise to and consolidated a new economic oligarchy, tightly connected with the post-socialist political elite. De-industrialisation destroyed the economy. Up to 130,000 lives were lost in the wars,<sup>3</sup> and millions were displaced.<sup>4</sup> According to *Trading Economics*, the unemployment in 2014-15 is between 12-13% in Slovenia, 14-15% in Montenegro, 16-20% in Croatia, 19-20% in Serbia, 27-28% in Macedonia, 43% in Bosnia, and 35% in Kosovo. In most countries, youth unemployment is usually around 40-50%. Predictably, all post-Yugoslav states are highly indebted, with Croatia and

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<sup>1</sup> This research is supported by the Leverhulme Trust.

<sup>2</sup> See S. Horvat and I. Štiks (eds.), *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics after Yugoslavia*, (London: Verso, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> See Humanitarian Law Centre’s human losses database: <http://www.hlc-rdc.org>

<sup>4</sup> 3.7 to 4 million left homes; more than 800,000 emigrated to various European countries and the US. For more details, see this graphic <http://www.grida.no/graphicslib/collection/balkan-vital-graphics>

Slovenia taking the lead, followed closely by Serbia.<sup>5</sup> So, when the 2008 crash provoked worldwide outrage, it also opened a space for the first strong public articulation of an anti-capitalist critique—in the media and public sphere but also through various social and political actions—after two decades of absolute dominance of neoliberal and generally right-wing ideologies and actors.

Before I define the ‘new left’, it first has to be distinguished from both the ‘old’ communist left and the ‘established’ post-socialist left. The ‘old’ left refers to the League of Communists of Yugoslavia that was established in 1919 as the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. It led the victorious and massive resistance movement during the Second World War and ran the Yugoslav federation from 1945 to 1990 when it disintegrated into its federal components. The League of Communists of each Yugoslav republic was then replaced with what I will call here the ‘established’ left of the post-socialist period. The former communist leagues rebranded themselves as ‘social-democratic’ or ‘socialist’ parties and embraced multi-party elections as well as the free market economy. Some of them were defeated at the first democratic elections in 1990, as in Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Macedonia. In all these countries, however, they would later win several elections. Some, however, remained in power throughout the 1990s as in Serbia (until 2000) or in Montenegro (until this very day).

It has to be said immediately that the ideological shift of these nominally left parties towards the centre and their acceptance of neoliberal doctrine was complete. At best, they turned into ‘third-way’ parties and embraced neoliberal policies; at worst, they became immersed in nationalist campaigns and wars, as was the case with the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia of Slobodan Milošević. All of these parties retained, however, a significant support, which can be explained by a persistent emotional and ideological attachment to the ‘old’ party but also, in some countries, by opposition to nationalist and conservative right-wing politics. These parties—except in Serbia where Milošević’s legacy continues to blur the right-left divide and still plagues any attempts at genuine left politics—are usually seen as non-nationalistic and more open to the demands of ethnic or sexual minorities. The ‘new left’ opposes the established left’s neoliberal politics and

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5 Government debt to GDP: 80% in Croatia and Slovenia, 70% in Serbia. Source: *Trading Economics*.

takes a critical and balanced look at the historic communist Left and its heritage. However, it praises the ‘old’ left’s social achievements, especially its generous welfare provisions, and contrasts them to the current capitalist reality.

So, what is this ‘new left’? This umbrella term—not without some similarities with the historic ‘new left’ of the 1960s—will be used here to encompass generally progressive political and social movements as well as ideologically profiled organizations that present themselves or are labelled as ‘radical left’. In other words, the term refers to a series of events, movements, and actors and not to a clearly distinct and organized political force. In this post-2008 period, spontaneous movements often erupt against general social injustices and concrete policies, expressing indignation without necessarily proclaiming a ‘leftist’ agenda; subsequently, however, the experience of social engagement and protests, as well as the radicalization of some protesters and parts of the general public, contribute to the rise of radical left organizations (groups, associations and even parties).

The main characteristics of the post-Yugoslav ‘new left’ are: critique of electoral democracy, followed by experiments or advocacy of direct, participatory, and horizontal democracy; critique of the neoliberal capitalist transformation of the post-Yugoslav societies and the so called ‘transition’ resulting in huge inequalities and massive unemployment and poverty; critique of the conservative, religious, patriarchal, and nationalist ideological hegemony that accompanied and made possible that transformation; defence of common and public goods, including natural resources, and the remnants of the socialist welfare state against privatizations and profit-oriented exploitation; and, finally, an internationalist approach to the post-Yugoslav and wider Balkan region, often coupled with an anti-nationalist and antifascist attitude. Not all the formations labelled here as ‘new left’ necessarily contain all of these elements, but they usually combine at least some of them. Three analytical angles are used to examine the formation of the ‘new left’ and to analyse its actions and wider social and political relevance: the *issues* that define the new left’s agenda, the *sites* where their struggles occur, and the *forms* they take.

## **The Issues**

*The Long Winter of Post-Socialist Discontent: Protests and Uprisings*

The diverse elements of the post-Yugoslav ‘new left’ have been formed in the eruptions of discontent and massive protest that recurrently hit this region. The usual issues are the general ‘corruption’ of the political elite, widespread poverty, and social despair. However, the trigger might be quite different in each case. In Croatia, in early 2011, citizens were at first invited to protest against the government via Facebook. Very soon, up to 10,000 people were taking protest walks each evening for a whole month through the streets of Zagreb. In November and December 2012, we witnessed the Slovenian ‘uprisings’ triggered by a revolt in Maribor against the corrupt local mayor.<sup>6</sup> The protests spread rapidly all around the country, involving 10-15,000 people in Maribor, 20,000 in Ljubljana, and thousands in smaller cities. Those were the biggest protests in recent Slovenian history, and they clearly targeted both the right-wing government and the entire political elite. The protests eventually initiated a number of local activist networks and gave rise to an important left political party (see below).

However, the biggest and most radical protests took place in Bosnia in February 2014. In the North-Eastern city of Tuzla, unpaid licensed workers of the local detergent and furniture industry joined hands with students, the unemployed, and discontented citizens. On 4-5 February, the protests swelled and turned into violent clashes with the police. The local government building was set on fire. The next day, the protests spread to all major cities in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, one of Bosnia’s two entities (protests were marginal in the Serb Republic entity), including Sarajevo, where the municipal building and the state Presidency were also set on fire. These dramatic events, followed by a series of local government resignations, created the biggest challenge to the post-war Bosnian polity. Protesters soon set up plenums—citizens’ assemblies—in large and small cities as a form of spontaneous citizens’ self-organizing. Both ethno-nationalist elites and the international community were taken by surprise. Over the course of three months the protest and plenum movement lost its initial energy and things got back to

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<sup>6</sup> G. Kirn, ‘Slovenia’s social uprising in the European crisis: Maribor as periphery from 1988 to 2012’, *Stasis Journal* 1 (2014), 106-129.

grim normality. However, these events gave rise to a series of movements struggling for ‘social justice’. For the first time in Bosnia after the war, social issues such as inequalities and unemployment, as well as privatizations and corruption, overshadowed ethnic politics.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, massive protests took place in Macedonia in summer 2015 against the right-wing government after the opposition released tape recordings evidencing massive corruption and criminality of the governing nationalist party and its leader. Street protests were reinforced by the student movement as well as by participation of citizens of all ethnic backgrounds.

### *Struggle for the Commons: City, Nature, Education*

Privatizations, neglect, or destruction of public goods continue to galvanize public opinion, prompting massive mobilizations. Many voices unite in criticizing the inequalities of social status, access to public services, education and health, general citizens’ rights, quality of living in urban space, and the exploitation of natural resources.<sup>8</sup>

Under the general banner of ‘Right to the City’ (*Pravo na Grad*), important movements formed across the post-Yugoslav region involving individuals of various political stripes, mostly ranging from left-liberal to radical left. Access to the very space where one lives—squares, parks, streets, and buildings—affects huge swaths of society and is likely to provoke an emotional as well as political reaction. The Right to the City movement grew significantly in Zagreb in 2009-11 in opposition to a major development project that altered a pedestrian street (*Varšavska ulica*) and one of the main downtown squares (*Cvjetni trg*). Protesters denounced corruption, gentrification and enclosures as well as the nexus between private capital and the city government. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Banja Luka, a movement developed in 2012 to oppose the destruction of

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7 More on the protests and their aftermath in D. Arsenijević (ed.), *Unbriable Bosnia-Herzegovina: The Fight for the Commons*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2014).

8 The Commons Working Group, ‘The Struggle for the Commons in the Balkans’ in V. Bibić, A. Milat, S. Horvat and I. Štiks (eds.), *The Balkan Forum: Situations, Struggles, Strategies* (Zagreb: Bijeli Val, 2014), pp. 9-34.

a park (*Picin park*) and its transformation into a housing complex. Like the Zagreb movement, it failed in its attempts but it resulted in the first public challenges to the regimes as well as to neoliberal hegemony.

We can observe a similar scenario in Belgrade where urban activists try to prevent the development of the ‘Belgrade Waterfront’ project. Supported fully and financially by the Serbian government, an Emirati investor plans to transform an enormous area in downtown Belgrade on the Sava riverbank into a zone of luxurious apartments and services. The dubious project, followed by a number of irregularities and illegal actions, provoked public outrage. The mobilization around the banner ‘*Ne da(vi)mo Belgrade*’ (Don’t Drown Belgrade) is not a movement of the left *per se* and its participants avoid presenting themselves as leftists. However, their direct inspiration by left urban movements in the region, insistence on urban commons, as well as the unavoidable critique of the neoliberal investor-oriented policies, place them, in my view, among the post-Yugoslav ‘new left’.

In a similar fashion, some initiatives fighting against the destruction of natural resources developed as wider citizens’ movements. The movement ‘Srdj is ours’ (*Srdj je naš*), in 2010-13, attempted to prevent the privatization of parts of the Srdj hill in Dubrovnik and the development of golf courses. In Montenegro, a micro movement in Beranselo against the garbage landfill polluting natural resources had strong resonance throughout the country. Recently, the local activist network ‘Bosnian Spring’ in Bihać, formed during the 2014 protests, succeeded in preventing commercial exploitation of the river Una.

Besides these struggles in defence of urban and natural commons, the most important movement of the ‘new left’ appeared in opposition to commercialization and privatization of higher education. By defending the idea that education is a common good that should be available to everyone, strong student movements, experimenting with direct democracy, developed in almost all post-Yugoslav states. The crucial event was the occupation of Croatian universities in April and November 2009 where the ‘plenums’—general assemblies of students, professors, and citizens—formed and articulated both the movement itself and a general critique of political oligarchies and representative multi-

party regimes as well as the capitalist economic system.<sup>9</sup> The occupation offered both the political rhetoric and organizational tools for all future student struggles in this region.<sup>10</sup> Similar occupations occurred later in Ljubljana in 2011 and in Belgrade in 2011 and 2014 and, finally, in Macedonia in 2014-15. Macedonian students and professors not only massively protested in the streets against the government's reforms of the educational system, but set up plenums and declared them 'free autonomous zones'. Student protest has taken place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Kosovo as well.

### *Workers' Activism: From Strikes to Occupations*

Recently, the Croatian rock band *Hladno Pivo* released a song about the post-socialist privatizations of industries, factories, and firms previously owned by the workers themselves under the Yugoslav system of self-management. The refrain goes as follows: *God, Homeland, Nation / All freeze! / This is privatization! / Free up space / For '200 families'*. The song nicely captures the right-wing conservative ideology (*God, Homeland, Nation*) that demobilized any opposition (*All freeze!*) to the state-run privatization process whose final outcome was supposed to be, as famously announced by the Croatian nationalist president Franjo Tudjman (1990-99), the creation of 200 wealthiest families. These '200 families' were those close to his party to whom the former social property was given almost for free. The industries collapsed, workers were laid off, and the former factory buildings and office spaces mostly sold as real estate. A similar scenario occurred in almost all former Yugoslav republics, with differences resulting from diverse political and social contexts. These privatization policies were only occasionally resisted, especially rarely during the war years of the 1990s.<sup>11</sup> Unions proved either corrupt or too close to the political parties or simply incapable of leading

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9 See *The Occupation Cookbook, or the Model of the Occupation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb* (New York: Minorcompositions, 2011).

10 See J. Bačević, 'They had sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll; we'll have mini-jobs and loans to pay': Transition, Social Change and Student Movements in the Post-Yugoslav region', in Horvat and Štikš (eds.), *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism*, pp. 223-41.

11 See, for example, G. Musić, *Radnička klasa Srbije u tranziciji 1988-2013* [Serbia's Working Class in Transition, 1988-2013], (Belgrade: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2013).



meaningful workers' struggles, apart from sporadic protests.<sup>12</sup> Only recently can one observe their more vocal opposition to new neoliberal labour laws (as in Serbia in 2014 and Bosnia in 2015).

A new phase of workers' activism and an alternative type of organizing can be seen, however, over the last decade, as some workers' initiatives joined forces with student and urban movements, leftist groups, prominent individuals, artists and intellectuals.<sup>13</sup> Workers of some privatized or bankrupt firms and factories staged public protests to alert the public to their problems. At the same time they required the judiciary and the state to react, to pay their wage arrears and pension contributions or to re-start production. This was the case of female workers of the Zagreb textile factory *Kamensko* and the Tuzla workers, most notably from the detergent factory *Dita*. Whereas the *Kamensko* workers failed in their attempts to win their workplaces back, *Dita* workers managed to preserve the machinery, get the judiciary to act, and re-start production in summer 2015.<sup>14</sup> In another case of takeover in northern Croatia, workers of *Itas-Prvomajska* occupied their bankrupt factory, re-started production, and continued to experiment with self-management and direct worker-ownership. In some other cases, such as the *Petrokemija* factory in Kutina, Croatian workers fight to keep the state as the majority owner with stronger worker representation on the management board. In Serbia, on the other hand, the pharmaceutical company *Jugoremedija* from Zrenjanin opted for a workers' shareholding model.<sup>15</sup>

## The Sites

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12 See M. Grdešić, 'Workers and Unions after Yugoslavia', in Horvat and Štiks (eds.), *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism*, pp. 65-81 and M. Ivandić and I. Livada, 'The Lines of (Dis)Continuity: Forms and Methods of Labour Struggle in Croatia 1990-2014', Research Paper Series of Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe No.3 (Belgrade: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, 2015).

13 Working Group on Workers' Struggles, 'Mapping of Workers' Struggles: The Position of Workers in Post-Socialist Balkans', in V. Bibić, A. Milat, S. Horvat and I. Štiks (eds.), *The Balkan Forum*, pp. 35-44.

14 E. M. Jukić, 'Workers' Takeover Saves Iconic Bosnian Firm', *Balkan Insight*, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/workers-takeover-saves-tuzla-s-iconic-detergent-company>

15 For both cases, see M. G. Kraft, 'Insurrections in the Balkans: From Workers and Students to New Political Subjectivities', in Horvat and Štiks (eds.), *Welcome to the Desert*, pp. 199-222.

To understand the events I describe above, we have to further examine *where* the various forces of the ‘new left’ are likely to emerge and act. The issues related to urban policies and management provoked an effective resistance, from obstructions of development projects (chaining to the trees in *Varšavska* to human-chain action to protect a modernist building from destruction in Skopje, for instance), to street performances and play-like interventions of the Right to the City movements in Zagreb and Belgrade. Protests would often take the form of marches, from the 2011 Zagreb walks and the walks of the *Kamensko* workers, to the Banja Luka ‘walkers’ opposing urban devastation.

The most privileged ‘indoor’ spaces for the ‘new left’ remain the universities. A series of occupations of universities’ premises opened up the sites where participants protested the reforms of higher education, discussed the content and burning issues of their struggles, and experimented with what they professed, namely with alternative type of democratic horizontal decision-making and participatory organizing. The student plenums inspired the spread of much larger Bosnian plenums that, for a couple of months in 2014, were organized in cultural and social centres, theatres, cinemas, and in the open air with massive participation of citizens from all walks of life.

Occupation of cinemas, theatres, and cultural institutions as part of the struggles for *beni comuni* (common goods), as in Italy and Greece, is not widespread, apart from one notable exception. In November 2014, Belgrade activists and artists occupied the privatized and closed-down *Zvezda* cinema. The leading figures among the occupiers refused to be seen as belonging to the ‘left’ and portrayed their actions as almost apolitical interest in cinema. However, based on the methods they used, protest iconography, and the questions raised (privatization of culture as common good), their action can be broadly placed within the contours of the ‘new left’ as described here. The occupation highlighted also another dimension, which is the relationship of the ‘new left’ movements to the cultural sphere and general intellectual activities. Many left-wing counter-hegemonic efforts, whose aim is to re-legitimize left discourse within the population at large, often come in forms of festivals and larger gatherings combining cultural content with political debates in open public spaces. Some of the most prominent events of this kind are the Subversive (Film) Festival in Zagreb, the Festival of Alternatives and the Left - Fališ in Šibenik (Croatia), the Open University in Bosnia-

Herzegovina, and the Workers and Punks' University with its May Day School in Ljubljana.

## The Forms

The activities of the 'new left' come for the most part in the following forms: media activism, petitions and referendum initiatives, protests, plenums, platforms, NGOs and, finally, political parties.

In the period since 2008, leftist ideas have gained a much wider acceptance, especially in Slovenia and Croatia and, to a certain extent, in Bosnia and Macedonia. This is primarily due to the emergence of a series of left-oriented media, newspapers, internet websites and portals and, unavoidably, the use of social media. To name just a few, from *Mladina* in Slovenia, *Le Monde diplomatique* in Croatia and, as of recently, in Serbia, web portals *Mašina* (Serbia), *Slobodni Filozofski* and *Bilten* (Croatia), newspapers *Zarez* and *Novosti* (Croatia) to the English language websites *LeftEast* (based in Romania and providing a communication space for the all-Balkan left).

Croatia's 'new left' actors are at the forefront when it comes to the use of petitions and referendum initiatives. They collected the required number of signatures—10% of eligible voters—for a referendum on the Labour law in 2010, against the monetization (concessions) of the highways and against outsourcing in the public sector in 2014.<sup>16</sup> The local referendum in Dubrovnik on the golf course development on Srdj hill succeeded but to no avail (the voter turnout was less than 50%)<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, there was a huge mobilization of various left and liberal organizations to vote 'no' in the referendum against the same-sex marriages. The referendum was successful (about one million people voted 'yes'), although the turnout was only 38% (unlike at the local level,

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<sup>16</sup> The referendums did not take place. The Constitutional Court decided that the initiatives were not in accordance with the Constitution. See The Constitutional Court of Croatia's webpage, [www.usud.hr](http://www.usud.hr)

<sup>17</sup> Balkan Insight, 'Dubrovnik to Build Gold Resort Despite Protests', 31 July 2013, <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/dubrovnik-golf-park-to-go-ahead>

at the state level there is no minimal turnout). However, some 500,000 people did mobilize and voted against this homophobic initiative.<sup>18</sup>

The ‘new left’ is usually the driving force behind student protests as well as behind the defence of the commons and urban space. Its presence is unavoidable in larger protests such as the *Facebook* protests, the Slovenian ‘uprisings’, and the Bosnian protests. Some of these protest movements opted for the plenum form, most notably students in Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, Macedonia, and protesters in Bosnia. The plenum as direct democratic body turned to be a crucial form of engagement and radicalization of the ‘new left’ actors. Despite polemics between advocates of direct democracy and those asking for more structured political organizations, it is beyond doubt that the ‘new left’ is marked by its involvement in democratic innovations and participation.<sup>19</sup>

Some actors of the ‘new left’ do form sustainable and more operational structures in the form of platforms, small political groups, and NGOs. We should mention, to name just some of the most prominent, the Initiative for Democratic Socialism in Slovenia, BRID (Organization for Workers’ Initiative and Democratization), Academic Solidarity, and Centre for Workers’ Studies (CRS) in Croatia, Marks 21, Anarcho-syndicalist initiative, Centre for Politics of Emancipation (CPE), and the platform of leftist organizations The Left Summit in Serbia, Bosnian Spring (*Bihać*) and The Left (*Tuzla*) in Bosnia, and The leftist movement ‘Solidarity’ in Macedonia.

Finally, the post-Yugoslav ‘new left’ cannot avoid the question of its participation in electoral politics and thus of the formation of political parties. So far, the transformation of the ‘new left’ movements into political parties and successful electoral campaigns has been effective only in Slovenia.<sup>20</sup> The United Left (*Združena levica*),

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18 ‘Croats Vote to Ban Gay Marriage’, *The Guardian* (1 December 2013),

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/dec/01/croatia-vote-ban-gay-marriage-referendum>

19 Democratisation and Participation Working Group, ‘Between Institutional and Non-Institutional Forms of Democratic Organizing: Towards Revolutionary Change’, in V. Bibić, A. Milat, S. Horvat and I. Štiks (eds.), *The Balkan forum*, pp. 68-85.

20 A different case—which should be analyzed separately—is that of the ‘Self-determination Movement!’ (*Levizja Vetevendosje!*) in Kosovo, which has a strong parliamentary presence (it won 13.5% of votes in the parliamentary elections and currently holds 16 seats out of 120). One of its leaders became mayor of Pristina in 2013. It is a broad popular movement whose leftist social and economic programme, anti-corruption zeal, rejection of foreign supervision, and opposition to privatizations—it recurrently organizes protests that sometimes turn violent—is coupled with nationalist rhetoric such as demands for the unification of Albania and Kosovo and insensitivity towards minorities, especially the Serbs.

inspired by parties such as *Podemos* and SYRIZA, was formed in 2014 out of three small leftist initiatives and parties. At the European elections in 2014, the ZL already won 5.5% of the votes (not enough to enter the European Parliament), but a couple of months later, it scored 6% at the Slovenian elections and won 6 parliamentary seats.<sup>21</sup> In Croatia, in spite of a myriad of initiatives and leftist activism, a similar electoral success has not been produced. There, the Workers' Front represents so far the most serious attempt to form a party for the future parliamentary and local elections. In other post-Yugoslav states, similar attempts did not occur so far or failed.

### **Conclusion: Successes and Failures of the Post-Yugoslav 'New Left'**

Since 2008, the 'new left' forces have definitely stepped onto the political and social stage of the post-Yugoslav societies. They experienced some successes, the first one being the very existence of a new internationally connected and modern left ready to struggle against the post-socialist predicament. Although largely politically unsuccessful, the plenums formed and functioned at the universities and in the Bosnian cities, movements struggling for the commons developed across the region, and significant street protests occurred. Where various actors of the new left joined forces, as in Tuzla in February 2014, the outcome was impressive and produced a political earthquake. The 'new left' definitely challenged nationalist, conservative, and neoliberal hegemony and opened a space for public presence of leftist ideas via the media, festivals, and public gatherings.

However, its failures are many. The single-issue struggles are not necessarily connected. Urban initiatives are not always interested in workers' struggles, while students and professors often fail to reach beyond academia. Attempts to build a sustainable and wider movement or stronger political parties capable of challenging the established parties or influencing municipal, regional and state politics have so far proved unsuccessful.

In short, the 'new left' made a surprise breakthrough in the region marked by a

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21 Republic of Slovenia, State Election Commission: <http://volitve.gov.si/dz2014/en/>

heavy legacy of defeated socialism, disintegrated Yugoslavia, destructive wars, and harsh capitalist 'transition'. As elsewhere, its various components in their respective societies will become a major political and historical force when they leave this legacy behind and start to create the conditions for a future shaped according to their ideals.